

Roundtable Best Practices

There are 11 best practice ideas listed below that have been gathered to date. Others will be added as they become available. Specifically, the task force is looking for ways to meet the needs of various geographic groups: urban/suburban, rural, technology rich, technology poor, etc.

1. Participation increased when attendees were included in the presentation process each month; i.e., lead opening, deliver announcements, lead a song, do the closing minute, etc.
2. Send monthly email reminders to leaders at least five to seven days before the roundtable with information about what is planned for the meeting. When appropriate, offer attending leaders a chance to register for upcoming events or activities before the registration is opened to the rest of the district.
3. Divide attendees into patrols so that the patrols run much of roundtable, rotating through responsibilities each month. Communities, if appropriate, can set up patrols and then elect a patrol leader. A patrol leader's council is conducted at the end of each roundtable to go over assignments for the next month.
4. Seek input from participants by conducting quarterly or semiannual start/stop/continue activity.
5. Keep attendance. This allows for recognition of those participating and identification of those not participating, and can lead to tracking of training needs. Provide nametags for all attendees.
6. Provide social time with snacks. Ask a unit to volunteer in advance to bring the snacks. These can be for pre-meeting or post-meeting as best suits the group's needs.
7. Provide materials for participants to view as part of the pre-meeting. This can often take the place of major announcements if people with "agendas" to push are there ahead of the meeting to share information and discuss programs with participants.
8. Provide announcement materials to participants pre-meeting in the form of a PowerPoint running (looping) show.
9. Rural—Rotate roundtable/forum between the largest communities in the district. Another option is to hold two roundtables/forums per month in different geographies of the district if staffing is available. Quarterly meetings are a third option for this group.
10. Rural—Lone Wolf District (covering the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles) of the Golden Spread Council has quarterly roundtable/forum meetings in three different communities. Each of the four months that the meetings are held the team travels to three different locations and puts on a roundtable in each location. This is not ideal, but considering the lack of high-speed Internet availability, it at least brings the message to unit leaders on a somewhat regular basis.
11. Urban—In some very urban areas of the East Coast, districts have chosen to have roundtable/forum meetings at times of the day that best work for their attendees. Some hold meetings early (from 5:00 to 5:30 p.m.), so that folks can come from work and then get home in time to have some family time before children go to bed; others have decided to have meetings later (from 8:00 to 8:30 p.m.), so that folks can go home first for dinner and family time and then come to roundtable.